



Community and Health Services Department
Office of the Commissioner

Memorandum

To: Members of Committee of the Whole

From: Adelina Urbanski
Commissioner of Community and Health Services

Date: October 6, 2016

Re: **The Fair Access Partnership Pilot - September 2014 - June 2016**

This memo provides an update on the Fair Access Partnership (Fair Access), a collective action of the Human Services Planning Board.

Fair Access is a partnership between York Region, the two School Boards and all nine local municipalities

Fair Access improves overall health and wellbeing by providing affordable recreation programs to students in Grades 6 to 8 living in communities with a higher proportion of low and moderate income families. Fair Access is being implemented through affordable after-school programs called The Drop Zone. All Fair Access partners have a role in contributing to the program's success:

- The local municipalities deliver the program
- The School Boards offer the facilities at no charge
- The Community and Health Services Department provides coordination to the partnership, initial start-up money and a portion of partnership funding

Partnership funding is based on the percentage of low and moderate income residents in each local municipality. The cost to York Region for the 2014/2015 school year was \$45,130 including start-up funds for four sites. It is anticipated the cost will be approximately \$35,000 for the 2016 fiscal year.

The Memorandum of Understanding has been extended

A two-year Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was developed in 2014 to formalize the partnership between the local municipalities, the school boards and the Region. The MOU outlines the roles and responsibilities of each partner with agreed data collection to measure return on investment. The MOU was developed by York Region in collaboration with both school boards and all nine of the local municipalities.

The MOU between five of the local municipalities, the two school boards and the Region has been extended until June 2018 to advance the program from the pilot phase to implementation. There is an option to renew the MOU beyond 2018.

Fair Access takes a neighbourhood approach to promoting overall health and wellbeing

A Drop Zone pilot program is operating in five of the local municipalities. School locations for the pilot programs were chosen based on the following criteria:

- A higher proportion of low to moderate income residents
- A higher proportion of recent immigrants
- Transportation as a barrier to recreation
- Lack of recreation services i.e. neighbourhood community services
- Willing participants

Drop Zone programs are made available to all Catholic and Public school students in the community. Inclusive programs offer a variety of fun recreation activities providing students an opportunity to try something new, develop new skills, make new friends and have a sense of belonging. Programs are free or charge a nominal charge of \$1.00 per day. Activities include:

- Leadership and life skills development
- Games and sports
- Homework help
- Healthy snacks and cooking

Table 1 shows the location of all Drop Zone pilot programs:

Table 1
Drop Zone Locations

Local Municipality	Host Schools	Neighbourhood Schools
City of Markham	St. Benedict CES	Aldergrove PS
Town of Richmond Hill	St. Charles Garnier CES	Roselawn PS
Town of Newmarket	Alexander Muir PS	Canadian Martyrs CES Poplar Bank PS
Town of Georgina	RL Graham PS	Prince of Peace CES Our Lady of the Lake CSS
Town of East Gwillimbury *	Holland Landing PS	Good Shepherd CES

* Started Spring 2016

Fair Access is making a difference in helping students thrive

There were 291 registrations for The Drop Zone pilot. Questions were developed by the partners to measure the return on investment. The results demonstrate a successful initiative:

- 99 per cent of participants completed sessions
- 97 per cent of participants wanted to return to the program
- 88 per cent of participants said they “got better” at something
- 84 per cent of participants reported feeling accepted
- 61 per cent of participants reported making new friends
- 57 per cent of participants reported they had increased homework support

Fair Access has contributed to broader community successes

A new Aquatics Leadership initiative has been developed between the Public School Board and the City of Markham for students to train to be a lifeguard or swim instructor while earning up to two high school credits.

Improvements have been made to a soccer field in Georgina which benefits all members of the community.

Council approved a pilot for after school programs in social housing sites

In March 2015, Council approved after school programs in four social housing communities offering similar program components, including youth outreach. Programs have produced similar results with a broader age group (7-17 years). Program delivery started in January 2016. In the first six months, 146 children and youth attended these programs.

A full report on the after school programs pilot in social housing sites is scheduled for 2017.

Adelina Urbanski
Commissioner of Community and Health Services

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